

Fourth Annual Meadowlands Festival of Birding set for Sept. 15-16

LYNDHURST, N.J. – Guided walking and boat tours, the “Bird Song Grammys” and birding workshops highlight the Fourth Annual New Jersey Meadowlands Festival of Birding. The festival takes place Sept. 15-16 at several locations throughout the Meadowlands in Bergen and Hudson counties.

“It doesn’t matter whether one is a novice or experienced,” said Captain Bill Sheehan, head of Hackensack Riverkeeper. “With nearly 300 different species of birds to be seen and 20 million people living nearby, the Meadowlands is ‘a natural’ for birding.”

The Meadowlands is the year-round and seasonal home to hundreds of birds, including majestic Peregrine Falcons, Great Blue Herons, Ospreys, Shorebirds, Waterfowl and more. Visitors will have a chance to view these beautiful birds from several trails including those in Richard W. DeKorte Park, which features the New York City Skyline as its backdrop, and from pontoon boats cruising the Hackensack River.

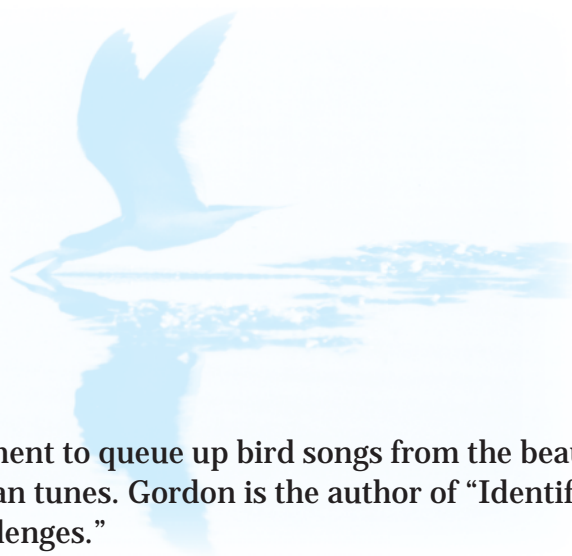
The recent increase in bird species spotted in the Meadowlands reflects the dedicated efforts of local environmental groups and state agencies to cleanup and revitalize the Hackensack River and its estuary, The Meadowlands, resulting in the restoration of a vibrant ecosystem.

“We’re very proud that we’ve been able to protect and perpetuate the natural beauty of the Meadowlands while at the same time promote responsible development,” said Bob Ceberio, Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, which oversees planning and zoning in a 30.4 square-mile swath of the Meadowlands encompassing 14 towns.

Pete Bacinski of the New Jersey Audubon Society said he is always thrilled to hear first-time festival goers marvel at the natural beauty and thriving bird life that can be found only a short distance from the New Jersey Turnpike and Manhattan.

“The festival is an introduction to the new birder of a marvelous habitat,” said Bacinski, Director of the Sandy Hook Bird Observatory.

The festival’s keynote program, “The Bird Song Grammys,” is an interactive, educational and entertaining event for birders of all experience levels. Jeffrey A. Gordon, a field editor for Bird



Watcher's Digest, uses digital equipment to queue up bird songs from the beautiful to the bizarre and test the audience's knowledge of avian tunes. Gordon is the author of "Identify Yourself: The 50 Most Common Birding Identification Challenges."

The workshops include sessions on "Birding Basics," "Colonial Waterbirds" and "Backyard Habitats," in which visitors can learn how to bring nature closer to home through the use of bird feeders, butterfly gardens and other devices.

There are also plenty of activities to pique the interest of children ages 10-17, who can attend free of charge. They and their parents can see a Barred Owl and Red-Tailed Hawk up-close in the "Rapp'n with Raptors" program and explore the Meadowlands Environment Center's Interactive Learning Center, where they can explore a three-dimensional diorama of Meadowlands life, view satellite images from space, peek at insects under a microscope and listen to the chatter of owls and crickets.

The first day of events is based at Richard W. DeKorte Park and the Meadowlands Environment Center at the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission in Lyndhurst. Buses will be available to transport festival goers to several of the off-site walking and boat tours. Sept. 16 is off-site field trips only; there will not be any activities at the Meadowlands Commission.

The Festival of Birding is organized by the New Jersey Audubon Society and Hackensack Riverkeeper and hosted and sponsored by the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission.

For more information, including a full schedule of events and costs, visit www.hackensackriverkeeper.org or contact Hugh Carola or Lisa Ryan of Hackensack Riverkeeper at 201-968-0808, Pete Bacinski of the New Jersey Audubon Society at 732-872-2500 or Brian Aberback of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission at 201-460-4619.

Sponsored by the:



**New Jersey
Meadowlands
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